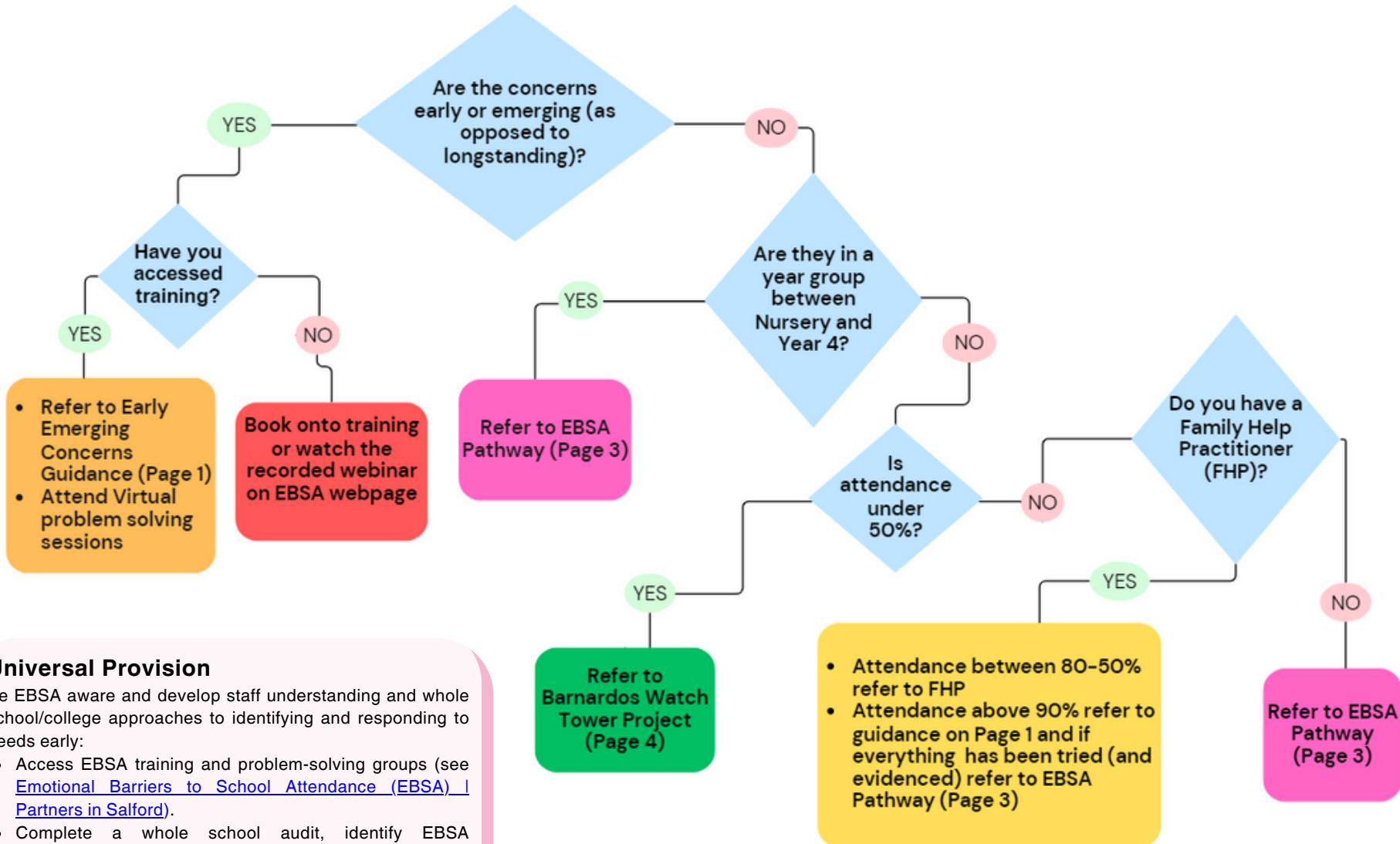


# Emotional Barriers to School Attendance (EBSA) Support Decision Tree



## Universal Provision

Be EBSA aware and develop staff understanding and whole school/college approaches to identifying and responding to needs early:

- Access EBSA training and problem-solving groups (see [Emotional Barriers to School Attendance \(EBSA\) | Partners in Salford](#)).
- Complete a whole school audit, identify EBSA Champions.
- Ensure a robust graduated approach to identifying and responding to needs early (see Attendance and SEND Graduated Approach documents [SEND Children Thrive Graduated Approach • Salford City Council](#)).
- Develop the use of Person Centred Planning Tools (EPS led training).

# Early Emerging Concerns - School Led EBSA Support System

## Early signs or indicators of EBSA:

Change in presentation or attitude towards school, family report distress around school attendance (e.g. before or after school), school notice changes in school such as late arrivals, missed lessons within school, attendance reduces/ pattern of non-attendance.

## Information gathering - be curious and non-judgemental

Ask **'What's going on here?'** rather than **'How do we get you back to school?'** Take a **blame-free, solution-focused and collaborative approach**, placing the voice of the child at the centre.

- Arrange a meeting between parents/ carers and school staff to discuss attendance difficulties as soon as possible.
- If a meeting in school is a challenge, alternative arrangements may need to be considered e.g., a home visit.
- Use the EINT (Early Identification of Needs Tool) to structure conversations and to generate initial ideas. Build a trusting and collaborative relationship.
- Include the young person in gathering their views. Depending on their preferences, they may want to meet separately rather than attend meetings (see information gathering tools, such as Return to School Questionnaire / Mapping the Landscape / Card Sort activity).
- Identify all the contributing factors (barriers to attendance and supporting factors). There are often several different things which affect a child or young person's attendance at school and a variety of things that make school attendance easier or more difficult for them. While some of these are 'within the child', others exist in those things around the child, both inside and outside of school.
- Listen to the family's experience (see Words have Power document) and co-produce support plans to address factors contributing to worries/ non-attendance.
- Explore unmet needs (e.g., such as SEND, neurodiversity).
- Ensure supporting services involved are aware of support plans (e.g. Virtual School / Social Worker / SEN Caseworker).
- **Guidance and resources** can all be found on [Teams](#) or the [EBSA website](#).

## Support planning – be responsive

Facilitate a **person-centred** planning meeting where the interplay of factors is shared and all are **supported to understand** the risk and resilience factors. Create next steps **together**, aimed at reducing risk factors and strengthening resilience factors.

- Using the information gathered, create an individual action plan that is agreed by everyone involved (including the young person) and recorded (see suggested templates and EINT ideas bank). If an individual attendance plan is in place, this should be referred to. Refer to 'ideas bank' in the EINT.
- Ensure plans are personalised and flexible.
- Identify key adult/s and points of contact within school, to ensure consistent home-school communication.
- Change the environment to make sure it feels psychologically safe. See Salford's Relational Approaches to Inclusion Guidance and the following resources for neurodiverse young people:
  - [How Can Schools Better Support Neurodivergent Young People.pdf - Google Drive](#)
  - [NEST Approach Oct 2023.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are in place (see the SEND Graduated Approach).
- Focus on what supports general wellbeing (this should not be contingent on school attendance).
- Provide support from a trusted adult to process and understand feelings and experiences linked to school e.g. see SEMH section of the SEND Graduated Approach, [Anna Freud Centre resources](#), [Greater Manchester's Resource Hub](#), [Better Health wellbeing resources](#) and [Understanding Your Anxiety | Autism Barriers to Education](#)).
- Consider how access to education will be facilitated to reduce anxiety about missed schoolwork (e.g. set up arrangements to send work home, provide access to online learning systems).
- Consider wider family support e.g. [Solihul approach courses](#) (available online for free), Salford School Partnership, Early Help Assessment, monthly EBSA parent/ carer sessions (see EBSA Parent/Carer handout 23-24) .

## Review (Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles) – be reflective

Ensure regular communication between home and school. Be open to needing to change plans. Reflect on what has gone well and areas that require further support and adjust individual support plans as needed.

- Review progress with the young person and their parents/ carers within 2-4 weeks.
- Meeting often, especially at the start would be recommended, even if it's a short meeting to ensure support plans can quickly be adjusted as needed.
- Celebrate any small steps of progress and record what has made this possible.
- Continue with frequent check in's / reviews, closely monitoring progress.
- Ensure good communication with the wider staff team.
- Ensure reviews are recorded and shared with key people.

**If little or no progress has been evident, a more intensive support plan is needed → refer to EBSA Pathway.**

### Has progress been made?

**Yes**

Continue with supportive adjustments. Ensure plans remain in place to check progress regularly/ at potential trigger points such as transitions/ holidays e.g. create a wobble plan.

**No**

Complete another review cycle. Attend virtual problem-solving sessions for support/ coaching. Seek peer support from EBSA Champions in other schools. Refer to other agencies as appropriate (e.g., Primary Inclusion Team, Educational Psychology Service, Thrive in Education).

# EBSA Pathway Referral

## *Prior to making a request it is important to consider:*

- What assessment and information gathering tools have been completed?
- How has assessment information been analysed to support a better understanding of the current situation and the young person and their family's views?
- How has assessment information been acted upon?
- What actions have been taken?
- How have these been reviewed and what has been the impact?
- How has communication with parent/ carers been supported?

Referrals for support should be made using the consent form and sent to [EBSA@Salford.gov.uk](mailto:EBSA@Salford.gov.uk).

The consent form can be accessed here [Emotional Barriers to School Attendance \(EBSA\) | Partners in Salford](#)

## *Who can refer into the EBSA Pathway?*

School, settings, professionals, and parents/carers can refer into the EBSA Pathway.

As detailed on the consent form, it is expected that certain actions will have been completed prior to a referral into the pathway. Without this supporting information referrals may not be accepted. The School Attendance Team, Primary Inclusion Service, Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS and Early Help can support you in the earlier stages of responding to emerging concerns. Please ensure you access EBSA Training (available for free on a termly basis).

It is recommended that assessment tools (e.g., Return to School Questionnaire) are used as soon as concerns are identified (e.g., as soon as any anxiety about school is identified, even if attendance is still 100%, as **swift action can prevent EBSA from becoming entrenched and result in much better outcomes**). Once assessment information has been gathered it is important to act on this through individualised support plans.

If you are unsure of how to act on assessment information, are highly concerned about a young person, or have completed cycles of plan-do-review with little or no impact, then the EBSA Pathway can be used.

## *What happens following a referral?*

A multiagency team (education and health representatives) will meet monthly to discuss referrals and identify a lead professional and suggested next steps. The referrer will be notified of the outcome.

# Barnardo's Watchtower Project

(attendance below 50%, Years 5 to 11)

The Watchtower Project is delivered by Barnardo's in Middlesbrough, Knowsley, Doncaster, Stoke on Trent and Salford. We work with young people who are struggling to attend school and help them and their families to identify and overcome potential barriers to improve school attendance.



*Looking out for you!*

## How will we work?

We will work with the individual young person and their family. We will offer weekly 1-1 sessions for up to 20 weeks, in person wherever possible. If face to face sessions are not possible then we will do our best to accommodate additional ways of working such as online or by phone. We will adjust the number of sessions based on the need of the individual and family. We will build relationships with the young person and parents / carers and will use a variety of activities to do this. Our sessions can take place in our Barnardo's services or Community Venues.

Alternatively, we can agree with schools to meet with the young person on school premises or visit the young person at their home. If sessions are to take place in school, then we would not intend to disrupt learning if the child is in lessons. We would work with staff and the young person to arrange a more appropriate time to meet. We will work together with the young person and parent(s)/carer(s) to carry out an initial assessment which will give us a starting point. We will work together to identify reasons for not attending school as frequently as expected and work to overcome such barriers through a variety of means. Part of this work may include developing further the relationship with you, the school. Some of our sessions may be with the young person, some may be split between the parent(s)/carer(s) and the young person, some may be used to work with the parent(s)/ carer(s) individually.

## Examples of things we might cover in our sessions

Each young person and family are unique, as are the reasons for not attending school. You will be more than aware of barriers linked to school attendance including low self-confidence, bullying, fear around school / people in school and friendship difficulties. Whatever the underlying reasons regarding school attendance we will work to address these in a supportive manner. We will use a trauma informed approach; we will be non-judgemental, and we will use a variety of strategies with the aim to improve school attendance.

**For more information about our service please contact:**

Rachel Parker, [rachel.parker@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:rachel.parker@barnardos.org.uk) 0164 2917 508

